

LANGUAGES, SIGNS AND SMOKE-SIGNALS

vicinity of the speaker and 'limeru' includes everybody, far 193
and wide, such as the human race.

Stone Age men have little use for numbers, for they have 802 •
so little to count. If a definite number is used at all, it is
usually under five. Fingers are the theoretical basis for
counting, and one is 'wonggain'; two 'marrama'; three is
two plus one; four is two and two; five is known as a hand,
'korng'. Six is hand plus one, and so on to ten, which is
two hands, 'korng-marrama'. When pidgin is in use, the [198]
numerals are one to five, and after that it is 'big mob'.

Aboriginal languages are 'alive' and are being altered to 197
meet new needs and conditions. Many new words have 192
been absorbed as a result of the Macassars trading here, and
so complete has been the acceptance and use of these terms,
that the oldest nomads, some of whom travelled to Macassar [197]
on the trading proas, do not readily recognize their origin.
With the advent of white traders, the Yulengor began to
assimilate English words, and at Yirrkala I found a boy
called Deamer (steamer) and a girl Giggerat (cigarette). [551]
Soap is 'jope', scissors are 'thither', razor is 'ye'zer', cock-
roach 'karkrartj', and from one end of the country to the
other, flying fox has been corrupted to 'bailanbok'. A nomad
can do no other than reckon the hours of the day by the sun, [805]
and as a consequence, clocks and watches are also known as
sun, 'wolu'.

'Dimit-dimlrr' is the word for barbed fronds on the
pandanus palm, as well as for thorny trees and spiky
anemones, but now it is given to introduced lemon trees and
barbed wire. 'To swim' is 'waitun' and to this they add the
suffix 'mirry', something like our suffix 'ful', meaning 'full
of', and the resultant 'waitunamirry' becomes a boat's
propellor. 'Kurrtā', denoting fire, firewood, or smoke, now
serves for an engine, and 'kurrtamirry', full of fire, is a shot-
gun or rifle. Any law is 'rorm', and the verb 'to give' is
'gurrpan', so that to teach something is 'rormgurrpan',